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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 8 August 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, dated 7 August 2016, regarding the eighth anniversary of the August 2008 war (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 35, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vakhtang **Makharoblishvili**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the identical letters dated 8 August 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the eighth anniversary of the August 2008 war

7 August 2016 marks the eighth anniversary of Russia's large-scale military intervention and aggression against Georgia. Since then, Russia has continued an illegal occupation of the regions of the sovereign and independent State, in violation of international law, as well as the commitments of the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement.

Eight years after the August 2008 war, as a result of the pragmatic approach of the Georgian Government, the risk of escalation of the conflict is significantly decreased, however the security and humanitarian situation in the occupied territories remains grave. Fortifying the occupation line by razor and barbed wire fences and the so-called "border" signs became a practice. These destructive actions are exacerbated by the abductions and illegal detentions of Georgian citizens. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees are still denied the right to safe and dignified return to the places of their original residence, while the remaining population in the occupied regions suffers from permanent ethnic discrimination. A clear illustration of that is the prohibition of education in their native language and the gross violations of the right to freedom of movement and property, which create the risk of a new wave of ethnic cleansing in the occupied regions. Moreover, Moscow launched the factual annexation process of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, integrating them into Russia's military, economic and social systems, which flagrantly infringes the fundamental principles of international law.

Despite Russia's provocative steps, the Government of Georgia firmly follows the peaceful conflict resolution policy. Georgia remains committed to active engagement in the Geneva International Discussions, aimed at resolving the outstanding security and humanitarian issues between Georgia and Russia in accordance with the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement. The Government of Georgia will further continue its rational policy towards Russia and will use all available diplomatic and political tools to resolve the conflict through peaceful means. Besides, the Government will spare no efforts to create favourable conditions for reconciliation between the war-torn communities and stay open to share the benefits of Georgia's European agenda with the people living beyond the occupation line.

Amid the ongoing occupation of the regions and serious security challenges, Georgia managed to succeed in its democratic transition and sustainable economic development, steadily moving along the path of its European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Georgia expresses its gratitude to the international community for the firm and unwavering support to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Georgian side calls upon the international community to further consolidate the efforts in responding to the consequences of the August 2008 war and for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia, in compliance with international law.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its deepest sympathy to the families of the soldiers and civilian population who fell victim to the August 2008 war, as well as to the entirety of Georgia.